

MINUTES
CITY OF BLOOMINGTON
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABILITY
Tuesday, June 8, 2010
6pm, McCloskey Room, City Hall, 401 N. Morton St.

Roll Call:

BCOS members: Bill Brown, Melissa Clark, Andy Davis, Matt Laherty, Ted Mendoza, David Parkhurst, Paul Schneller, Cynthia Schultz, Heidi Russell Wagner (ex-officio), Dave Rollo (ex-officio), Maggie Sullivan (arriving late)

Staff: Jacqui Bauer

Meeting called to order

No public were present to comment

Announcements

Heidi: county has been working on stormwater utility—unlikely to happen before the elections

Dave R.: related to the Gulf of Mexico oil spill—estimates of amount of oil spilling into the Gulf have been increased; seeps have also been detected that raise question of whether relief well will actually solve the problem. This further demonstrates the need to move away from oil as fast as possible. Dave met with Rep. Baron Hill, who is willing to deliver a letter to Sec. of Energy Steven Chu. Asked commission for their support. Dave made motion to have Chair Cynthia Schultz sign on to the petition, Paul seconded, motion passed. Dave will circulate the text of the letter to make sure all agree with the wording.

Paul asked for a clarification of roles between the sustainability coordinator, city council, the commission chair

- *forward job description to whole commission
- *clarify with Danise and Adam what the org chart should look like
- *by next month

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from April were approved.

Discussion of strategy session from last month

Big topics identified: Food received most weighted votes, also energy, water, housing, other (communication/education/policy advising)

Matt led a discussion of where to go from here.

FOOD:

Matt is lead on this topic.

With previous water effort, group worked together to identify priorities and interests; result was the report submitted to CBU/Council earlier this year.

Food is also somewhat complicated—Matt will send out list of food-related topics of interest to team members, then work as a team to drill down to what initiatives the group will work on.

Paul also pointed out need to identify the players in the community who can impact this topic—some constituencies may cut across various topics so commission can coordinate. Also a need to look at undertakings that are short- vs. long-term.

Dave R. pointed out that there are windows of opportunity—topics that are coming before council or being addressed in the budget process. Orchards, chicken ordinance are examples. IU—working on larger-scale composting; looking at creating local aggregator to enable local farms to process for large buyers like IU. Some concerns with student gardens since students leave in the summer when gardens are most in need of work.

WATER:

Melissa is lead on this topic.

Will postpone discussion on this since Melissa is not here.

Opportunities may be emerging for a coordinated rainbarrel project with various departments.

There are also opportunities because CBU is working with IT to reformat water bills. Jacqui will keep commission informed of how this is developing.

Also add MCCSC curricula initiative listed under communication/education/outreach to the water initiative since there is such a need to focus on education now.

ENERGY:

Heidi is lead on this.

Distributed energy is of great interest, especially in relation to reducing vulnerabilities in water treatment.

Bill—interested in changing feed-in tariff laws, requiring a statewide system to support renewable energy. Indiana Power and Light has made this available for Indianapolis—rate may allow 7-year payback for large scale installations.

Maggie—would be good to get SIREN involved.

Each group will need to decide what initiatives they want to take on now—for example, “bring back shade trees” was one suggestion, but may fragment group’s momentum.

COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION/OUTREACH:

Ted may be logical person to coordinate this since he’s proposing to lead effort to bring info together through a website.

Group agreed to ask CATS to cover BCOS. It may be August before they can get to it because budget process takes so many hours. Andy will pursue this.

Educational events/conferences—Bill is lead for this topic. This is part of his job already, so may not need to be considered as a separate activity.

MCCSC—may be most closely tied to water initiative right now, but perhaps keep as ongoing connection. Paul took on leadership of this component of outreach.

ADVOCACY:

Paul, Toby, Andy all proposing to lead internal advocacy activities, so may make sense to break that off as a separate sub-team. Andy will lead this effort for now. May be helpful to identify specific points at each meeting that BCOS wants to communicate to various constituencies.

Dave R. advocated thinking carefully about how to support elected officials in making decisions that may be controversial.

Jacqui will play a key role in advocacy activities—linking council and commissions and departments.

Better info on what Economic and Sustainable Development does as a department, especially in connection to green jobs. Perhaps add this to list of issues that advocacy deals with.

Local currency is also a topic this group may deal with.

STAR REPORT:

May be opportunities to link our efforts with upcoming ICLEI effort to establish a system of sustainability indicators for communities—Jacqui asked that Bloomington be included as a pilot community but this hasn't been finalized yet. In the interim, we will explore a lower-level update of our STAR report for this year. Paul and Cynthia will continue as co-chairs; will meet with Jacqui to discuss how to proceed.

Also makes sense to pull this out as a separate sub-committee

Committee Reports/discussion of future meetings

Water Committee met—Melissa will lead this, especially intending to focus on water conservation education. Waiting till she is back from maternity leave to introduce her to Pat and proceed forward.

Vision statement—also needs to be included in upcoming agenda. Matt suggested that 3-4 sentences would be an appropriate length for a vision statement.

BCOS received a request to have Transition Bloomington present at an upcoming meeting; we may postpone this until August as well to avoid putting too much on the agenda. We will also need to reschedule the ICLEI presentation.

Adjournment at 7:37pm.